

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of:)
Encryption of Amateur Radio Communications) RM No. 11699

The State of Illinois Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) respectfully submits these comments in reference to the Commission's Rulemaking in the above-captioned proceeding¹.

Specifically, the petition seeks to make it possible for amateur radio emergency communicators to utilize encryption schemes when transmitting sensitive or private information. As an example, the American Red Cross operates a 'Safe and Well' internet system which allows for displaced persons to communicate with their family members during the aftermath of a disaster. This system relies upon cellular and internet technology to transmit private information about the displaced individuals to their database. In the absence of internet, landline or cellular technology, amateur radio may not be used to support this data stream in spite of the fact that the digital technology to do so is freely available, due to the FCC's prohibition on the use of 'codes or cyphers'. Other data which might not be suitable for transmission via open communications protocols would include SMS data, IPAWS (CAP) data, food, medical supplies or fuel transportation information, etc. The list of potential need for secure transmissions is almost limitless when one considers a post-disaster scenario.

Securing critical and confidential information from the public will be a valuable program in a post-disaster scenario especially as described above. Our community of trained Auxiliary Communications (AuxComm) personnel needs to be equipped with the appropriate tools to carry out any mission provided. Although encryption will not be needed on a day-to-day matter of operations, there certainly are specific uses that should be considered. We recommend that encryption be considered for specific uses, by specific authorized State RACES/AuxComm personnel. This will need to be enforced by safeguards and policies to prevent abuse. Before approval, Illinois recommends a further in-depth analysis by a multi-dimensional team of federal, state and local stakeholders be assembled with the specific duty to put forth a recommended plan of consideration to the FCC as it relates to Encryption of Amateur Radio Communications. The State of Illinois - Statewide Interoperability Coordinator appreciates the opportunity to provide comments.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/

Joe Galvin
State of Illinois -Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

¹ Federal Communications Commission, Rulemaking No. 11699, released July 2013